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1945-07-20 Alfred P. Maurice Letter to Dolores Robson

Alfred P. Maurice, 1921-

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Friday 20 July 1945
Headquarters Command
APO 75. Fuso.

(14)

Hello Darling,

I am at the end, or nearly so, of another day. It has been a very drab day, I did not get a letter from you. I didn't think I would because I got three yesterday. I wish I could get three every day because it is as dear as I can get to you these days Darling.

In the past half hour I have had four bottles of beer and no two have been the same. I had Pabst, Ballantine's, Schlitz, and Krengers, all possibly good beers. My case is Pabst but I lent out some bottles to fellows who had not received their beer last night and I got this medley of brews as payment for the debt. The beer tastes very good to me this month for some reason. Maybe it is because I haven't had any for a while. I wish I had some way of fixing it though. It would be much better cold.

The work in the office still comes in in dribbles which make it hard for me to get at those portfolios of sketches I want to do. I have the master drawings for six of them now and am going to try to finish the others tomorrow. We have a lot of trouble with some of the people therein the office. Some officers who we don't know from Adam will come rushing upon a dither and want to borrow some of our drafting tools. With this equipment as hard to get as it is Wiley and I have developed the habit of shaking our heads as soon as anyone even heads in our direction. Some of these officers come over with very incomplete directions and think that we have nothing better to do than just to do the work over and over again until we hit it just exactly what they want. That I do not like at all. It seems that every piece of work to be done must be done immediately. The only trouble with that is that we have more than enough of our own work to keep us busy for quite a while. What burns me up is that most of this urgently needed work we do just lies around for days after ~~we~~ we finish it. It is also displeasing me much. I am very easily displeased these days. I have what is known as the far-away-from-you blues, and they are very bad. The only remedy for them is a ten to twelve thousand mile trip. At the present time the army seems reluctant to allow me to undertake the journey. I will as soon as possible though my Darling and will allow you to administer your miraculous cure for this dread ailment I am suffering from.

Saturday Noon -

Hello Sweetheart;

I'm sorry I left you so suddenly last night but Harry and I started talking about food and I got as hungry as the devil. Just about that time in came Kowalechuk and the other boys from AG who were on their way to the Esmeralda to get some chicken chow mein. I decided to go along and try the stuff. It turned out to be the best I have ever eaten. It really was swell, my only complaint about the whole thing was that I could have eaten a heck of a lot more. I was very hungry and the plateful of the stuff they gave me hardly sufficed to serve as an appetizer. I'm having a hell of a time getting well fed. In our mess hall the Filipinos on the serving line are a mess sergeant's dream come true. They dole out the food as if every bit of it they gave out would have to be paid for by them. Even when I ask for more I don't have enough to see. The cooks usually used to dole out the meat themselves because of the KPs were inclined to give out enough to everyone. Now, however, the cooks let the Filipinos dole out the meat because they give out even less than the cooks would dare. Such is life. It will seem damned good to get home so I can sit down and order what I want and know that I won't get up from the table hungry. Of course you realize that this is not my only reason, or even my main reason, for wanting to get home; but it is one reason. While at the Esmeralda last night I even danced one dance, struggled through it would be more like it because I had in J.D. was rusty as the devil was on a crowded 6' by 6" dance floor, and danced with a girl who insisted on doing one step while I did another. I don't think I stepped on her toes but I'm not sure. After that I went back to my chow mein. The girl I danced with was the one I met the first time I went there only now her mourning period is over and she had on a colored dress over which there was a little discussion. She was sitting at the table with the whole gang of us and I made some such comment as "Well, I see you're wearing green now." Immediately I was informed that the dress was a sky blue in color. I'll still swear on a stack of bibles that the dress was green. If it was sky blue all I can say is that my sense of color must be getting steadily worse. One of the girls who works there is quite a character. She speaks about seven languages and can really sing American slang. She is one of these gum chewing individuals who speaks out of the

corner of her mouth, gangster style. It isn't a bad place to go a night though. It is much better than the dives in town and the food is good and relatively reasonable. The Chow mein last night cost me only four pesos and I got two slices of bread (a rare commodity here) with some sort of cheese spread on it. Kovalchuk and the AG boys are up there every night after work. I've only been there a few times, my purse won't allow it to become a habit.

We don't have to go in to work until 3:00 PM because there's some kind of meeting being held in the office. That is OK with me because I can do some letter writing to you. No mail again this noon. I hope I get some tonight.

My shoes are giving me a lot of trouble. I have two pairs, one of them leaks like a sieve and I just lost the heel of the left shoe in the other pair. It so happens that the right shoe in the leaky pair is the worst offender so I have decided to wear one shoe from each pair. Of course this makes my look a little odd to bystanders because one shoe is suede leather and the other smooth, one is about a half inch higher than the other and one is an 11 1/2 B while the other is an 11 C. But what the hell, I don't care. The only person I really want to look my best for is you and I don't think you'll see them. Tuesday is salvage day and I'll have to decide which pair I want to send to the repair shop, the leaky ones or the heelless ones. You must admit that it is a knotty problem, especially since there is so damned much mud around here. I can't walk very well without a heel but neither can I walk comfortably with a shoe full of mud. War is hell.

It is now mid-afternoon the same day - 4:30 PM to be exact. The fellows from the J3 section, of which I am a member, gathered around the bunk and we had an old fashioned bull session which featured a few jokes. One that I liked was the one concerning a dinner party at which one of the guests suddenly grabbed a plate of lettuce, poured it over his head and rubbed it all over his head. No one said anything to him because they didn't want to embarrass him. The next day his hostess met him on the street and asked him why he had rubbed the lettuce all over his head. "Oh," he said, "was that lettuce? I thought it was cauliflower."


Another concerned (I'm inquiring the comments you

made about that last joke.) the highly improbable situation of a priest who was called away suddenly so that he could not hear confessions. Since he didn't want the people to miss confession, he decided to get his very good friend, a rabbi, to hear confessions for him. He went into the confessional with the rabbi to show him how it was done. Along came a young girl who went into the confessional and told the priest that she had intercourse with a man three times. The priest told her to say ten prayers and drop 'em into the collection box on Sunday. Along came another girl who also had intercourse with a man three times so she also had to say ten prayers and put 'em in the box. The rabbi ~~felt~~ felt that he had the idea, so the priest left. Along came a girl and she told the rabbi she had intercourse once with a man. The rabbi said, "you got to say ten prayers and put 'em in the collection box, and you got two more coming."

There was no mail again tonight. I'm feeling quite down in the dumps and wish some would come soon. I need cheering up of course if you could get out here somehow you could do the job much more thoroughly than letters ever could, but I'll settle for the letters since I can't have you.

One of the fellows just read a little note by a soldier which ^{most} expresses my mood completely. It is, "What I want to get out of this army ~~is~~ is me." I like nothing at all about the army and like it less every day. I just never will get used to being ordered around by everyone and told what to do all the time. I'd be so damned glad when the time comes when I can do what I want. The army is the most ~~democratic~~ undemocratic thing going and grates me the wrong way at every turn. I was fed a steady diet of heroes who tolerated no abridgment of their liberties - the doctrine of "all men are created equal," give me liberty or give me death, and equal rights, when I was in grade school. Then in college - I'm across Thoreau and a few other boys who advocated freedom. Then I get "tossed into an organization in which I am continually told that being a good American means following the

leader unquestioningly giving up all my rights, and doing any dirty work that happens to come up. It's bad enough when they force me into this damned army, but when they try to tell me that it is democratic or American, that is just a little too much for my delicate stomach and it makes me feel very sick indeed. This damned war just has to end soon because if it doesn't end soon I'd be a very bitter man indeed. Three years of this life are a long time in any man's language, and a year away from you is a still much longer time Darling. I want so much to be with you again. I feel very much the way my character, Herman, looks.

By the way, Darling, how do you like these latest envelopes about Manila. I don't know whether they need explanation or not but, if you have any questions about any of them, fire away and I'll answer them. While I think of it I want to ask you if you'd care for some of the native novelties which they sell here let me know. They have purses made of straw - there are some plain ones with a large weave which aren't bad, wooden shoes with gay straps and carved and painted sides , straw ~~for~~ cigar cases, and a lot of other odds and ends. If you'd care for any of the things I have mentioned why let me know. I haven't been able to find any of that linenware you told me about but I don't think I will find any because cloth and clothing are so damned hard to get here. I guess we'll have to buy that in Canada too. They should have linenware from some of the British Dominions for sale there.

How is our fund coming these days? I guess I have dipped into it to get all the gifts I had you buy for birthdays. I'll send you some money to replenish it as soon as I start earning some with my drawing. Have you seen where the Senate is now going to consider ~~an~~ an amendment to the J.D. bill of rights increasing the amount of money to be paid to servicemen going to school and that married men will get \$5 a month now. It has already been passed by the House. If they keep this up you won't even have to work part time while

